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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 1362
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 1271
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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: LIFE ON THE STEPPE, July 27-31

¶1. This is another in a series of weekly cables drawn mostly from public media, as well as think-tank, NGO, and opposition web-sites, selected to show the diversity of life in Kazakhstan, and information about it available to citizens of Kazakhstan. Our goal is to choose what might interest and be of use to various end-users in Washington and -- especially -- to provide a more complex view from the other side of the world, illustrating the vitality (and sometimes the quirkiness) of discourse available to citizens of Kazakhstan.

NO ROAD TO LAKE ISSYK-KUL ...

¶2. On July 27, the Ministry of Transport announced that the construction of a road from Almaty to Issyk-Kul has been delayed. The road -- a shorter route between Kazakhstan's largest city and the popular recreation destination of Issyk-kul Lake -- was originally slated for completion this year, but the Ministry of Transport now expects it will be done in 2012.

... BUT 6-LANE HIGH-TECH SUPERHIGHWAY TO BOROVOYE RESORT

¶3. On July 29, Minister of Transportation and Communications Abalgazi Kusainov announced that in 2010, Kazakhstan will issue a tender worth 16 billion tenge (more than \$106 million) to select a company to construct "an intellectual transportation system" along the recently built six-lane highway connecting Astana with the Shuchinsk-Borovoye resort. Kusainov expects the "intellectual transportation system" to include video monitoring, speed control, and road transport counts along the entire length of the highway. "The system will allow us to provide emergency communications and a means of informing road users of road and weather conditions," Kusainov said. According to the Minister, the company will have seven years to collect tolls to recover their investment, after which time, "tolls will be lowered to a symbolic minimum that will be enough to maintain the road."

SOUTH KAZAKHSTAN DECLARES WAR ON TICKS

¶4. South Kazakhstan Province allocated 200 million tenge (more than \$1.3 million) of provincial funding to eradicate red ticks which spread the Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic fever. South Kazakhstan is a natural habitat for the red ticks, and the Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic

fever is a naturally occurring disease in this region. The red tick's habitat has increased over the last few years due to the constant migration of livestock. The most severely infected areas of South Kazakhstan oblast will be subject to a special anti-tick treatment, which will be completed within 10 days. The eradication includes the treatment of human dwelling areas with chemicals, and will also be administered to herds of small livestock, mainly sheep and goats. Local authorities from other affected areas requested the central government allocate another 200 million tenge to complete eradication throughout the oblast. South Kazakhstan Province registered 11 cases of Congo-Crimean hemorrhagic fever, of which six resulted in fatalities.

LAVISH MILITARY PARADE PLANNED FOR AUGUST 30 IN ASTANA

15. On July 29, Vice Minister of Defense Nurlan Dzhulamanov announced that the Ministry of Defense will spend 400 million tenge (more than \$2.6 million) for a military parade on Constitution Day (August 30) in Astana. According to the Vice Minister, more than 2300 people are expected to participate in the parade. Dzhulamanov added that 120 units of military equipment and 40 airplanes, including front line and army aircraft, and new helicopters bought in the Russian Federation, will also be displayed.

MORATORIUM ON APPOINTING OFFICIALS TO VACANT OFFICES CANCELLED

16. On July 30, the Prime Minister's Office announced the cancellation of an April 1 moratorium on appointments of state officials, which was expected to remain in place until the end of the year. According to the press office, the decision was made "after consideration of the results of the government's measures to reduce vacant public positions." In April, Prime Minister Karim

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Masimov announced that the moratorium was expected to eliminate 4,000 vacancies. Masimov also declared that state holding companies would be involved. The personnel of Samruk-Kazyna's parent company was to have been reduced two-fold, and its subsidiaries and affiliated companies were to have been subject to a 15 percent reduction. Salaries of the holding's officials were to have been reduced by 30 percent.

PRESIDENT EXTOLS ASTANA CYCLING TEAM'S VICTORY IN TOUR DE FRANCE

17. Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulated the Astana cycling team on its victory in the Tour de France, via a telegram to the team which said, "We have been anxiously awaiting your victory, and you have not disappointed us."

HOAGLAND